

SECRET

28 June 1965

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SUBJECT: The Northern Sea Route

1. The Northern Sea route is generally used from late June through late October. It is primarily a merchant marine show involving the resupply of Arctic ports, the delivery of river vessels to Siberia, and the export of timber and other goods from northern areas.
2. Naval units also are transferred. For example, one F-class submarine has already left the Baltic for the Northern Fleet and we believe that it will be transferred to the Pacific this summer via the Northern Sea Route along with several other subs.
3. It is interesting to note that on two occasions, Soviet nuclear submarines have transferred to the Pacific under the polar ice cap. The one K-class attack submarine and the one K-class ballistic missile boat now with the Pacific Fleet both used this route last year.
4. To our knowledge, no American citizens or ships have transited the Northern Sea route.
5. For the past few years the Coast Guard has sent a helicopter-carrying icebreaker into the Arctic Sea to watch the Soviet naval convoy as it approaches the Bering Straits at the eastern end of the route. The Soviets do not seem particularly happy about the US surveillance effort--last year a helicopter from one of the Soviet icebreakers tried unsuccessfully to lower its wheels into the rotors of the US helicopter.
6. Attached are photographs of the 1963 naval convoy.

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